

Snowflakes



— AND —



Sunbeams

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SNOW.

DOWN out of heaven,
Frost-kissed
And wind driven,
Flake upon flake,
Over forest and lake,
Cometh the snow.

Folding the forest,
Folding the farms,
In a mantle of white ;
And the river's great arms,
Kissed by the chill night
From clamor to rest,
Lie all white and shrouded
Upon the world's breast.

Falling so slowly
Down from above,
So white, hushed, and holy,
Folding the city
Like the great pity
Of God in His love ;

Sent down out of heaven
On its sorrow and crime,
Blotting them, folding them
Under its rime.

Fluttering, rustling.
Soft as a breath,
The whisper of leaves,
The low pinions of death,
Or the voice of the dawning,
When day has its birth,
Is the music of silence
It makes to the earth.

Thus down out of heaven,
Frost-kissed
And wind driven,
Flake upon flake,
Over forest and lake,
Cometh the snow.

CANADIAN FOLKSONG.

Published in Atlantic Monthly



THE doors are shut, the windows fast ;

Outside the gust is driving past,

Outside the shivering ivy clings,

While on the hob the kettle sings.

Margery, Margery, make the tea,

Singeth the kettle merrily.

The streams are hushed up where they flowed,

The ponds are frozen along the road,

The cattle are housed in shed and byre,

While singeth the kettle on the fire.

Margery, Margery, make the tea,

Singeth the kettle merrily.

The fisherman on the bay in his boat

Shivers and buttons up his coat ;

The traveler stops at the tavern door.

And the kettle answers the chimney's roar.

Margery, Margery, make the tea,

Singeth the kettle merrily.

The firelight dances upon the wall,

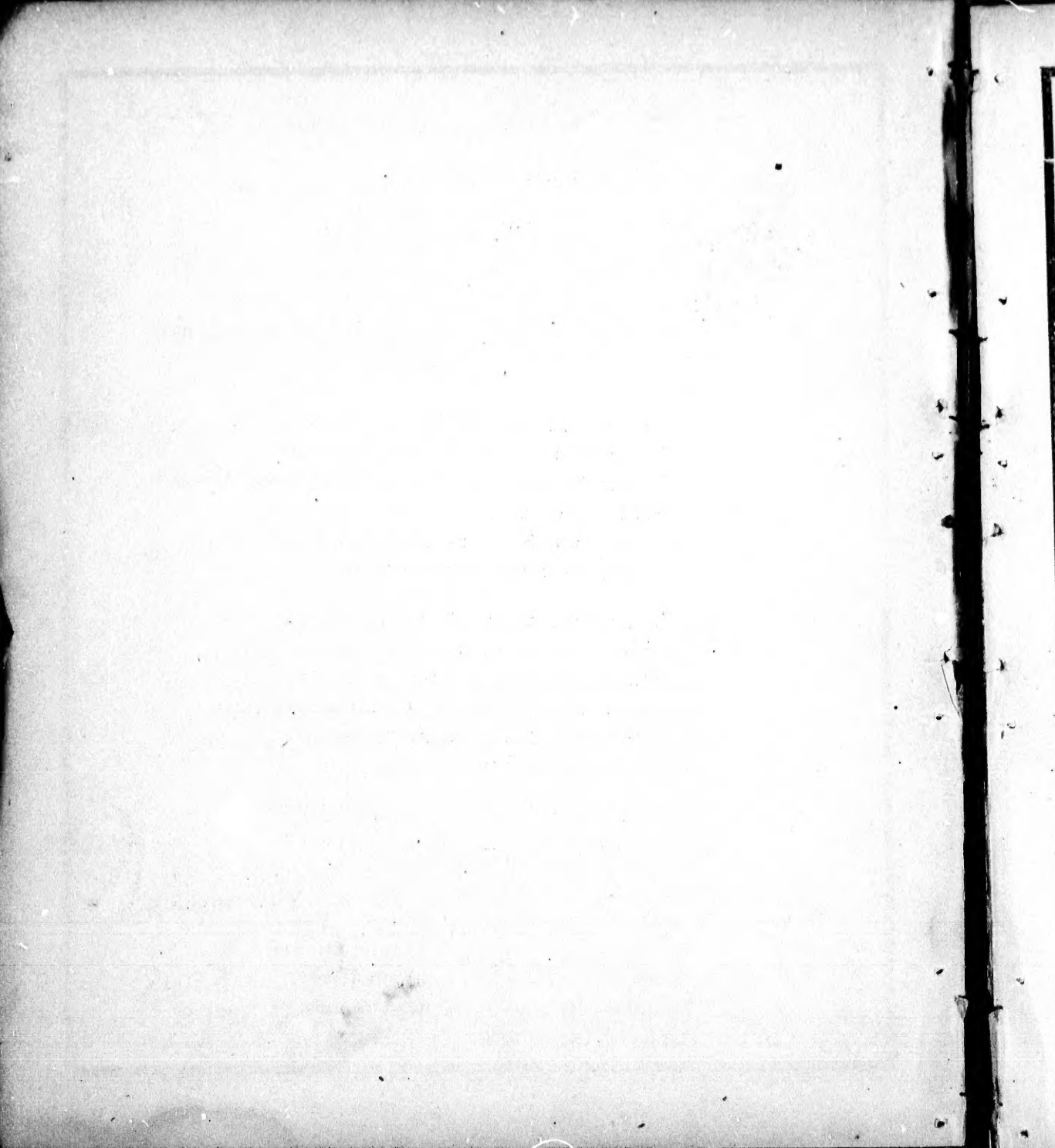
Footsteps are heard in the outer hall ;

A kiss and a welcome that fill the room,

And the kettle sings in the glimmer and gloom.

Margery, Margery, make the tea,

Singeth the kettle merrily.



TO A ROBIN IN NOVEMBER.

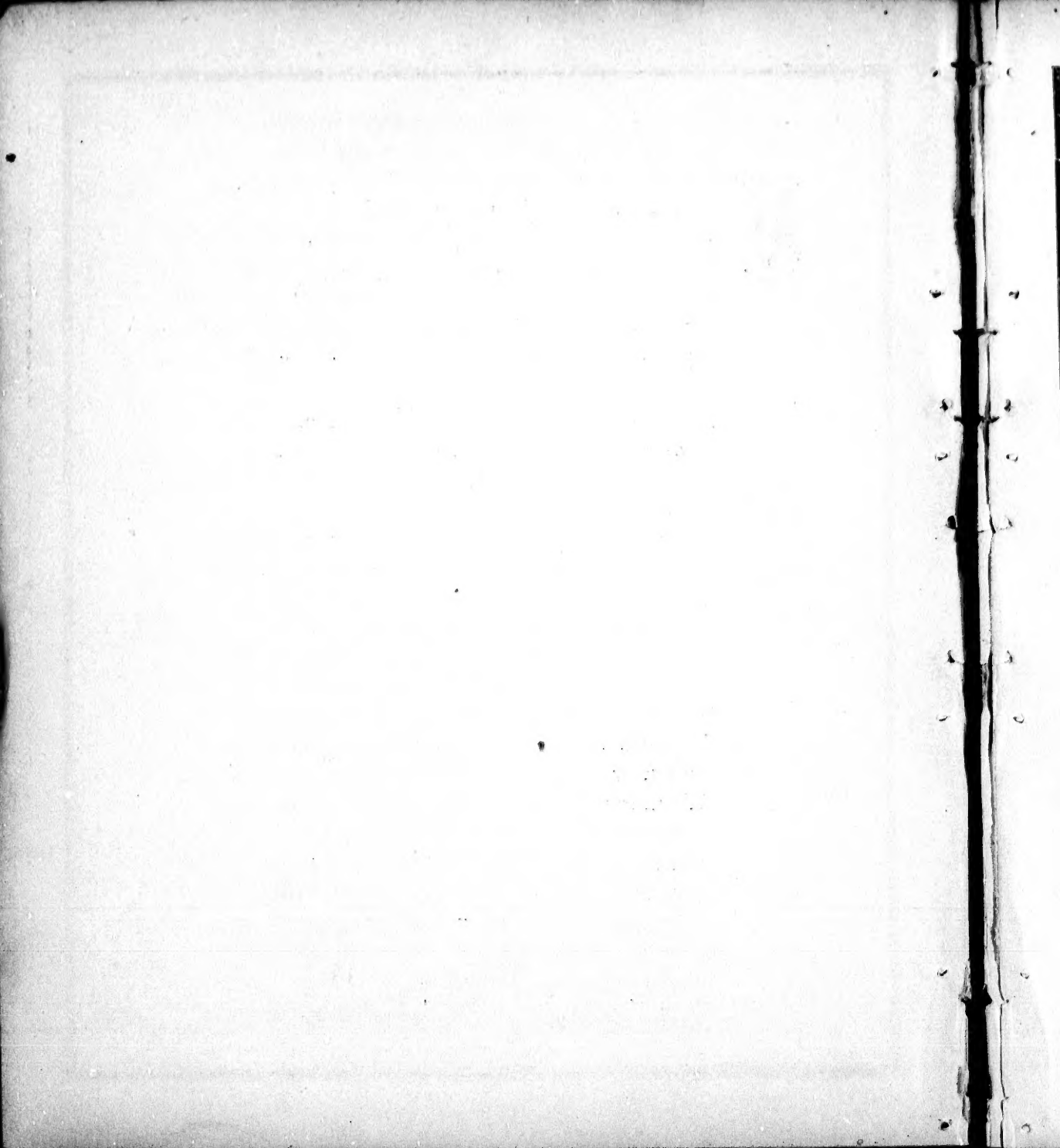


SWEET, sweet, and the soft listening heaven reels
In one blue ecstasy above thy song
In the red heart of all the opening year,
In the hushed murmur of low dreaming fields
Hung under heaven 'twixt dim blue and blue ;
Where the young Summer, purpled and pearly in dew,
Mirrors herself in June, and knows no wrong.

Sweet, sweet, throwing thy lack of fear
Back to the heart of God, till heaven feels
The throbbing of earth's music through and through.

Dreaming in song,—great pulsing-hearted hills,
Cradling the dawn in mists and purple veils
Of vapors, over pearls of lakes and brooks
Girdled about the neck of half the world,
When the red birth of the young dreaming June
Kisses the lands with gales, and murmurs, and trills
Of melody, lips that blossom with tales
Of music and color and form and beauty of looks
And snowy argosies in heaven furled,
All summer set to one sweet warbled tune.

And thou, red-throated, comest back to me
Here in the bare November bleak and chill,
Breathing the red-ripe of the lusty June
Over the rime of withered field and mere ;
O heart of music, while I dream of thee,
Thou gladdest note in the dead Summer's tune,



Great God ! thou liest dead outside my sill.
Starved of the last chill berry on thy tree,
Like some sweet instrument left all unstrung,
The melodious orchestra of all the year.
Dead with the sweet dead summer thou had'st sung ;
Dead with the dead year's voices and clasp of hands ;
Dead with all music and love and laughter and light ;
While chilly and bleak comes up the winter night,
And shrieks the gust across the leafless lands.

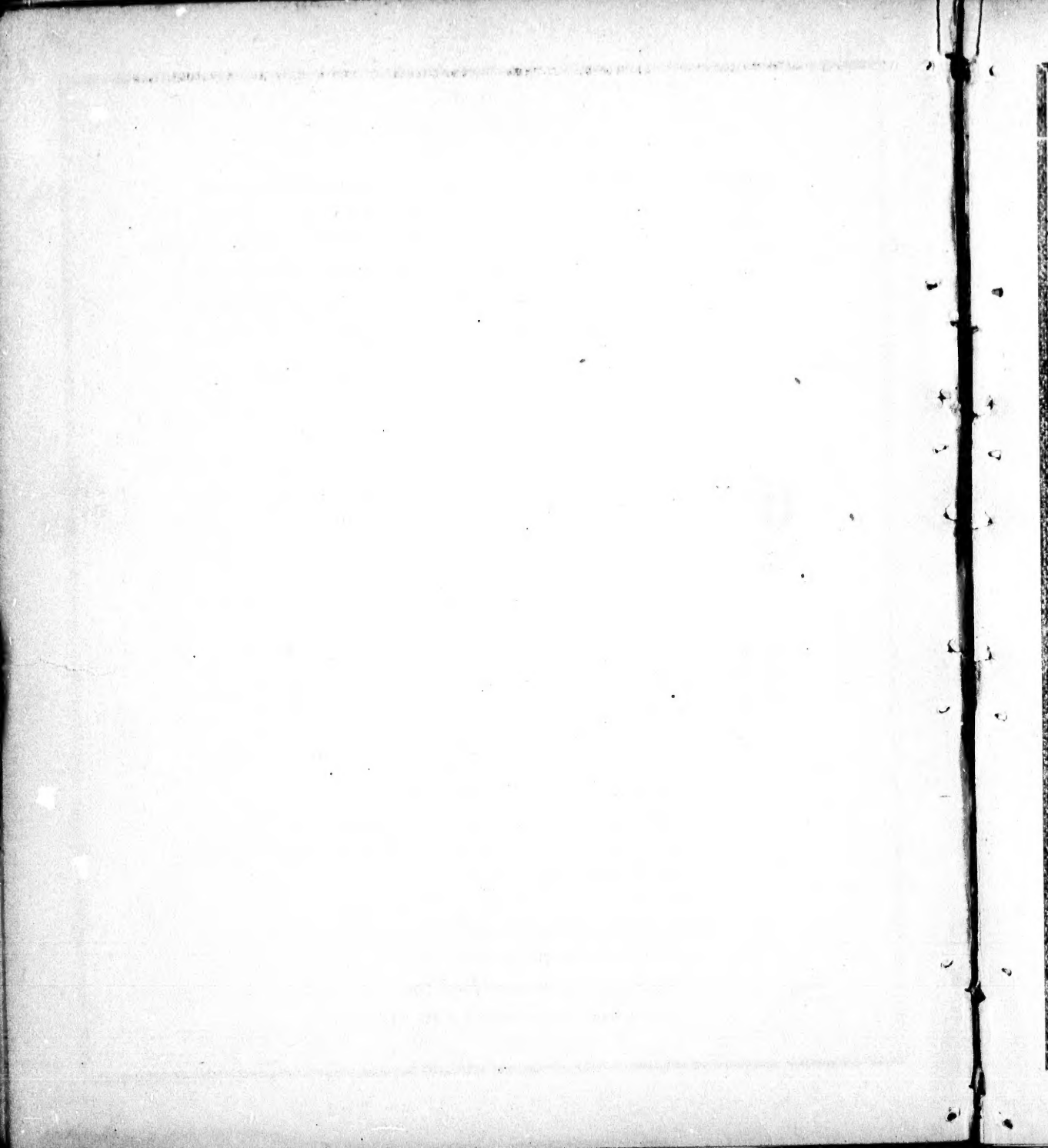
IN THE STUDY.



OUT over my study,
All ashen and ruddy,
Sinks the December sun :
And high up over
The chimney's soot cover,
The winter night wind has begun.

Here in the red embers
I dream old Decembers,
Until the low moan of the blast,
Like a voice out of Ghost-land,
Or memory's lost-land,
Seems to conjure up wraiths of the past.

Then into the room
Through the firelight and gloom,
Some one steals,—let the night-wind grow bleak,
And ever so coldly,—
Two white arms enfold me,
And a sweet face is close to my cheek.



ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

IN byre and barn the mows are brim with sheaves,
Where stealeth in with phosphorescent tread
The glimmering moon, and, 'neath his wattled eaves,
The kennelled hound unto the darkness grieves
His chilly straw, and from his gloom-lit shed,
The wakeful cock proclaims the midnight dread.

With mullioned windows, 'mid its skeleton trees,
Beneath the moon the ancient manor stands,
Old gables rattle in the midnight breeze,
Old elms make answer to the moaning seas
Beyond the moorlands, on the wintry sands,
While drives the gust along the leafless lands.

BY THE FIRE.

HEAR the wind over the chimney,
How it whistles and croons and sings,
And the flames and sparks fly upward,
As if borne on unseen wings.

The moon like a silver crescent
Peers under the elm-tree bough,
And the city of frost on the window pane
Is illuminated now.

I cower and fancy and fancy,
Till far in the middle night,
The hopes of a vanished past lie dead,
Like the ashes dead and white.

LITTLE BLUE EYES AND GOLDEN HAIR.



LITTLE blue eyes and golden hair
Sits like a fairy beside my chair,
And gazes with owlish look on the fire,
Where the great log crackles upon his pyre ;
And down in my heart there broods a prayer,
God bless blue eyes and golden hair.

Little blue eyes and golden hair
Chatters and laughs and knows no care ;
Though far outside the night is bleak,
And under the eaves the shrill winds shriek
And rattle the elm boughs chill and bare ;
God bless blue eyes and golden hair.

Little blue eyes and golden hair,
Taken all sudden and unaware,
Caught in the toils of the drowsy god,
Has gone on a trip to the Land of Nod ;
Half fallen in my lap she lies,
With a warp of dreams in her lash-hid eyes ;
And deep in my heart still broods that prayer,
God bless blue eyes and golden hair.

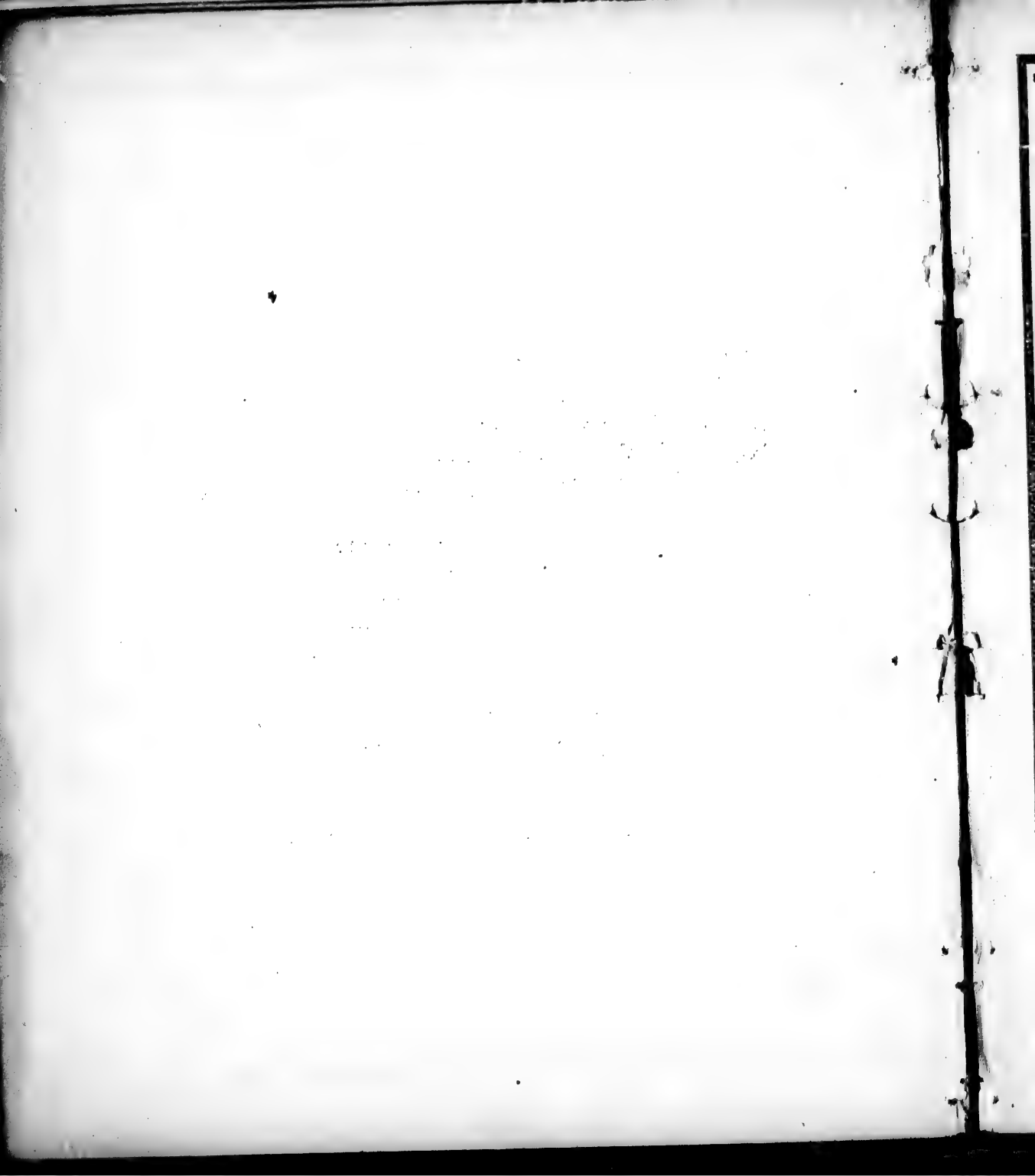
BARBERRIES.



BARBERRIES clustering on the bare walls,
What is the beauty with which you glow?
What are the blushes of secrets you know?
Flaming each spot where my footstep falls,
Barberries clustering on the bare walls.

Barberries clustering on the bare walls,
I know two lips as red as your red;
Two cheeks as blushing with love unsaid,
A heart whose glowing your glow recalls;
Barberries clustering on the bare walls.

Flame with it, flame with it, over your walls,
Whisper my love of it, round the bleak year;
'Till love makes summer of winter drear,
And heart holds heart in the sweetest of thralls;
Barberries clustering on the bare walls.



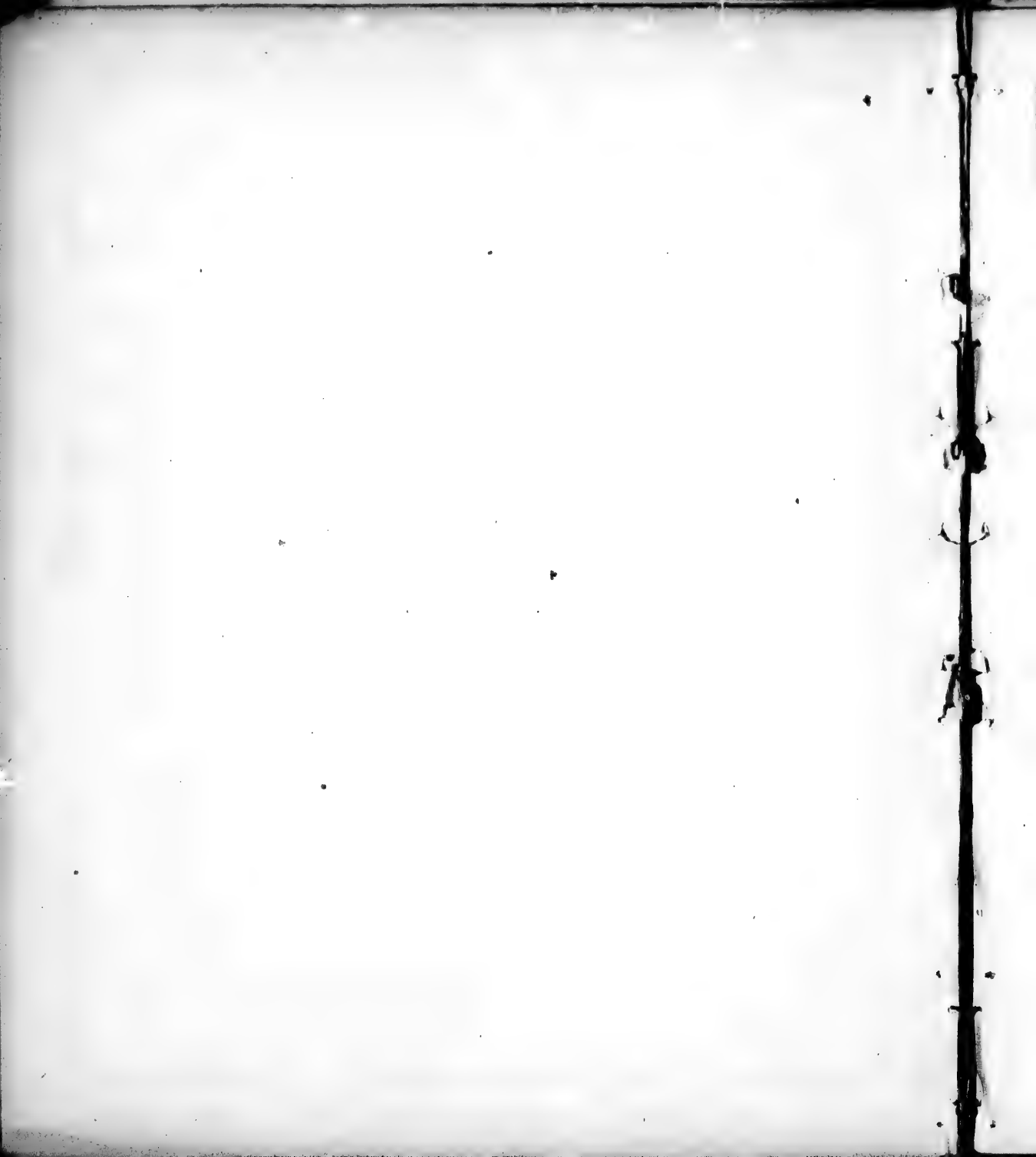
THE PASSING YEAR.



LIKE vikings came the rude blasts of November
Chanting aloud the death song of the year ;
Sadder and bleaker came the pale December,
With haggard woods and fitful dying ember,
And leaves all dead and sere,
Withered and sere.

I sit alone where the bright hearth-logs gleaming
Into the gusty night red sparks do send ;
The chimney's moan doth answer to my dreaming,
And the old year hath to me all the seeming
Of a familiar friend,
An old but vanished friend.

Bloweth the winter, from his forest leaping,
Loud Boreas cometh from bleak arctic field,
Cometh with white gust in the midnight sweeping,
And findeth the Old Year like some Norse-king sleeping
Upon his battle shield,
With white locks, on his shield.



A WINTER'S NIGHT.



SHADOWY white,

Over the fields are the sleeping fences,
Silent and still in the fading light,
As the wintry night commences.

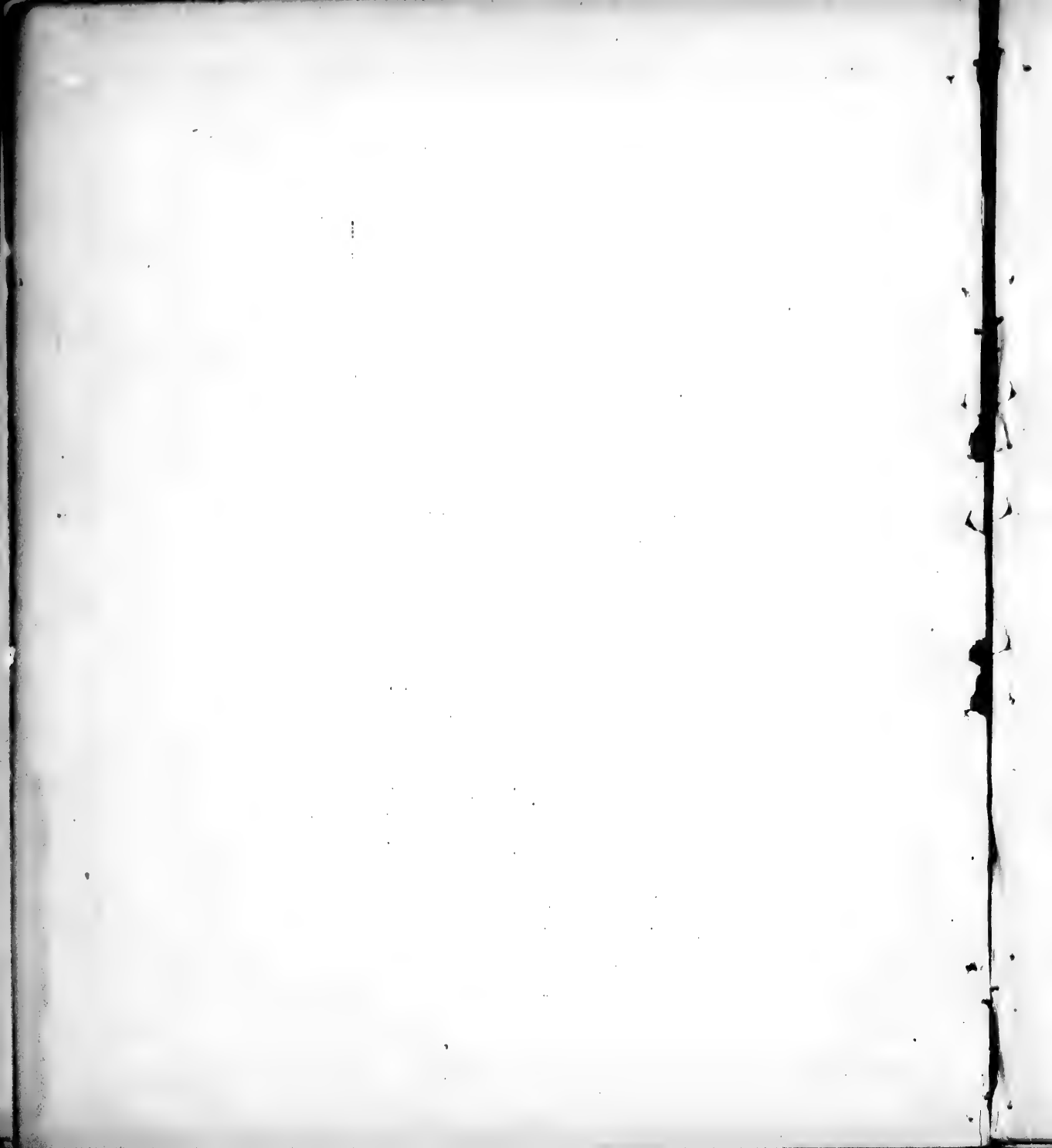
The forest lies
On the edge of the heavens, bearded and brown ;
He pulls still closer his cloak, and sighs,
As the evening winds come down.

The snows are wound
As a winding sheet on the river's breast,
And the shivering blast goes wailing round,
As a spirit that cannot rest.

Calm sleeping night !
Whose jewelled couch reflects the million stars
That murmur silent music in their flight—
O, naught thy fair sleep mars.

And all a dream—
Thy spangled forest in its frosty sleep,
Thy pallid moon that sheds its misty beam,
And looming wraiths that o'er the moorlands creep,

As through the night
The trailing snows wind as a funeral train,
And softly through the murky morning light
The grim gray day comes stealing up again.



OLD VOICES.

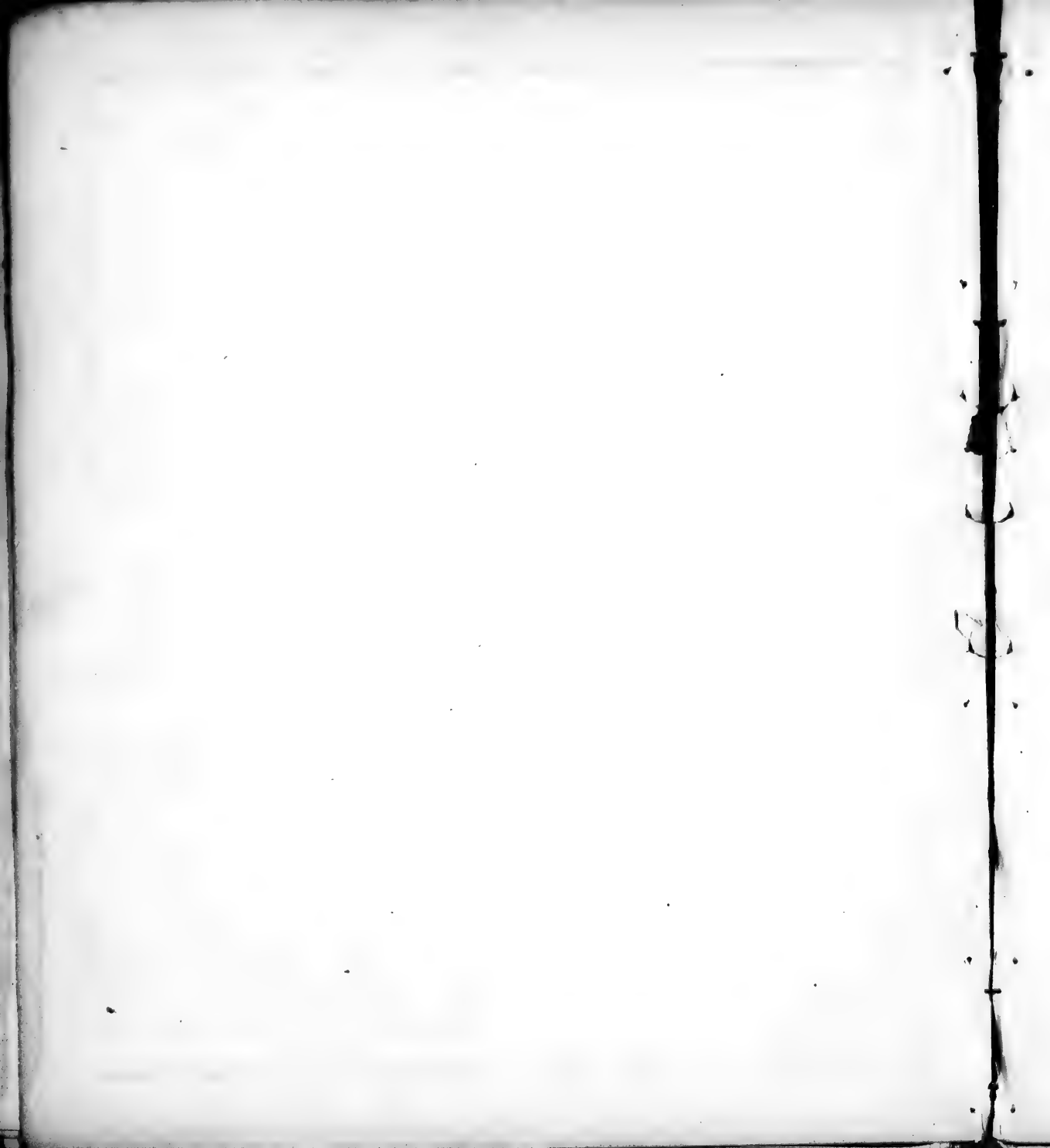


STAND on the confines of the past to-night—
The world that is gone before ;
And in the dim flicker of the parlor light
Old shadows steal before my sight
From its strange and misty shore.

And bygone murmurs are in my ears,
And sweet lips touch my cheeks ;
And old, old tunes, that no one hears,
Now steal to me from the sad old years,
And sweet words that no one speaks.

But only the rythm of an old-time tune,
That steals down the halls of time ;
And comes so soft, like the far-off rune
Of a stream that sleeps through the afternoon,
Or a distant evening chime.

And in the silence that intervenes
Sad voices whisper low ;
Come back once more to the loved old scenes—
To the dim old region of boyhood's dreams—
To the sweet world you used to know.



FEBRUARY.



THOU chilly month of wind and rain,
Of drifting at the whited pane,
'Twixt winter's birth and winter's wane ;

Thou shrouded month of muffled snows,
Of gales from far off arctic floes,
When winter dieth of his woes ;

Dost thou not through thy ice-bound girth,
Hear, in the warmer heart of earth,
The young spring dreaming of its birth,

When, stealing through thy mailed, strong
Ice-armor, comes the sweet low song
Of pied wind flowers, their streams along,

With sweet first-thoughts and prophesies
Of warm wet winds and soft blue skies
And meadows all a green surprise?

O, go thy way with gust and blow,—
For all thy looks of wintry woe,
Thou had'st a warm heart 'neath thy snow,

And all thy bluster and thy gust
A softer nature did encrust,
Which had the whole year's hopes in trust.

MIDWINTER NIGHT'S DREAM.

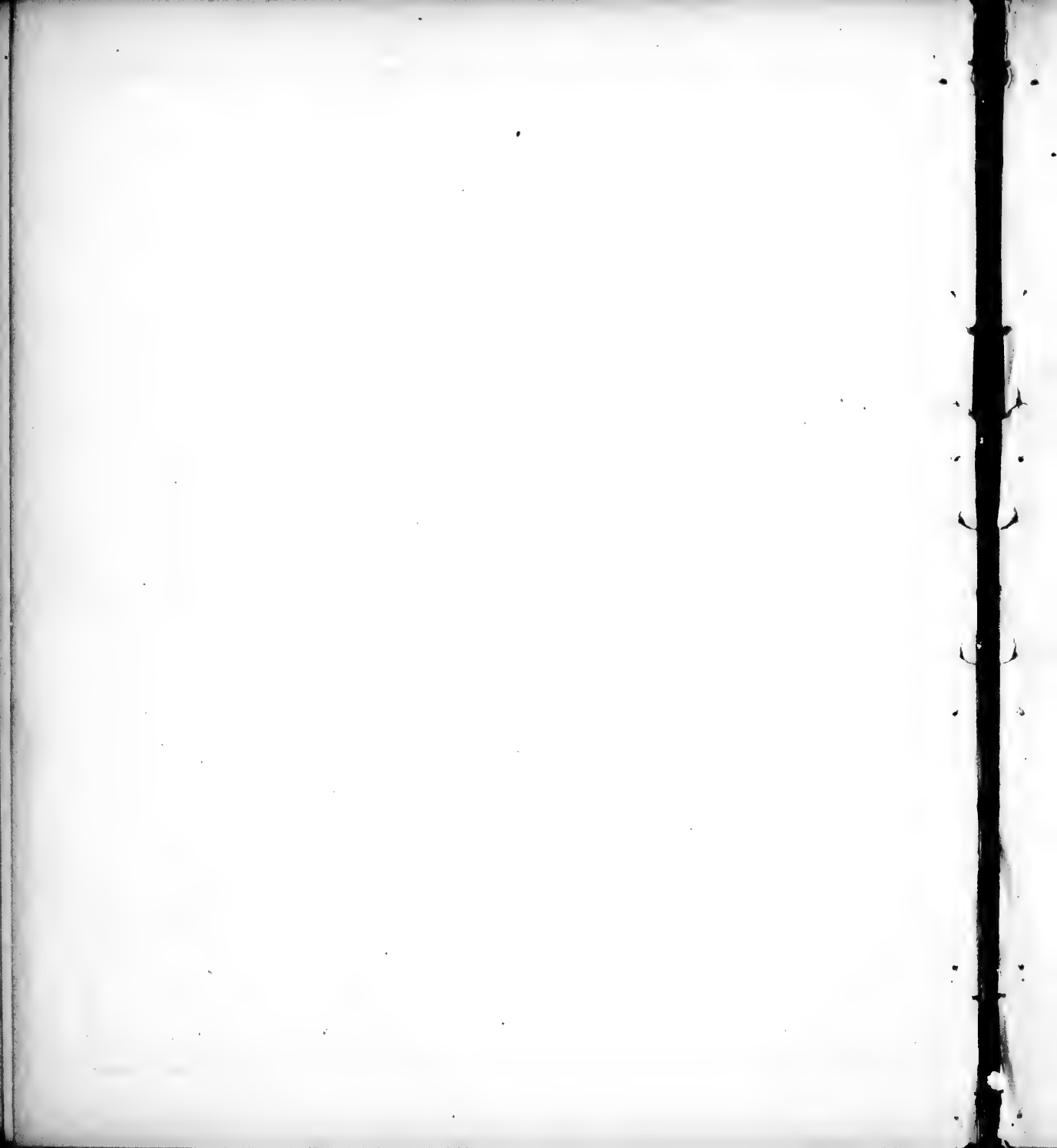


HE snows outside are white and white,
The gusty flue shouts through the night,
And by the lonely chimney light
I sit and dream of summer.

The orchard boughs creak in the blast,
That like a ghost goes shrieking past,
And coals are dying fast and fast,
But still I dream of summer.

'Tis not the voice of falling rain,
Or dream wind blown through latticed pane,
When earth will laugh in green again,
That makes me dream of summer.

But hopes will then have backward flown,
Like fleets of promise long out-blown,
And Love once more will greet his own,—
This is my dream of summer.



ON A MARCH MORNING.

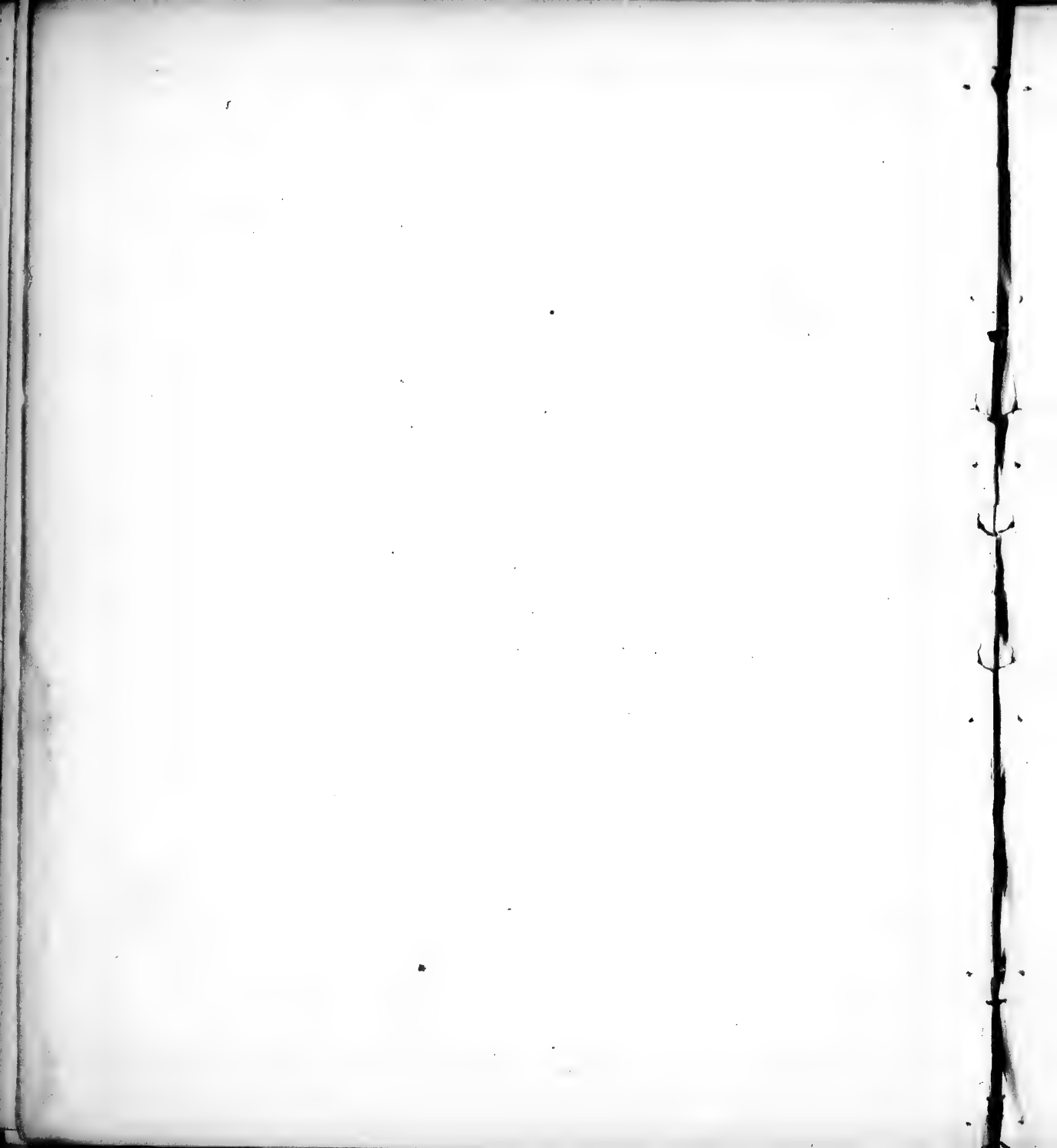


OUR elm is heavy with ice,
The mountain is hid in a mist,
And the heaven is gray
Above, and away,
Where the vapors the hill-tops have kissed.

The fields are bleak with patches of white,
Our stream is still shut in his prison
Of ice and of snow,
And the sun, half-aglow,
Scarce over the forest is risen.

But there is something abroad in the air,
Perchance 'tis the spirit of spring,
That fills me with fancies
Of blue skies and pansies,
And songs that the meadow brooks sing.

Some spirit the season has sent,
With visions of blossom and leaf,
And song—as a token,
Of feeling unspoken,
In this time of the aged winter's grief.



SUNBEAMS.



HEY weave a web of light and shade
In leafy nooks at noon,
And in the caverns of night they spin
The white locks of the moon ;

They build the walls of Nature's house,
Each smites with a golden bar ;
They climb down at night on silver strands,
And each is tied to a star ;

And then at dawn they softly steal
In the east through their golden door,
And weave a woof of roseate hues
On the ocean's shimmering floor ;

And every pearl of lustrous tint,
And every gem divine
That borrows its light from the ocean's night,
Is the child of their airy mine ;

And whether by night or whether by day
They loosen their shining skein,
It falls down out of the heaven's deep
In a silver or golden rain.

BEFORE THE DAWN.



ONE hour before the flush of dawn,
That all the rosy daylight weaves,
Here in my bed, far overhead
I hear the swallows in the eaves.

I cannot see, but well I know,
That out around the dusky grey,
Across dark lakes and voiced streams,
The blind, dumb vapors feel their way.

And here and there a star looks down
Out of the fog that holds the sea
In its embrace, while up the lands,
Some cock makes music lustily.

And out within the dreamy woods,
Or in some clover blossomed lawn,
The blinking robin pipes his mate
To wake the music of the dawn.

THE DEWDROP.

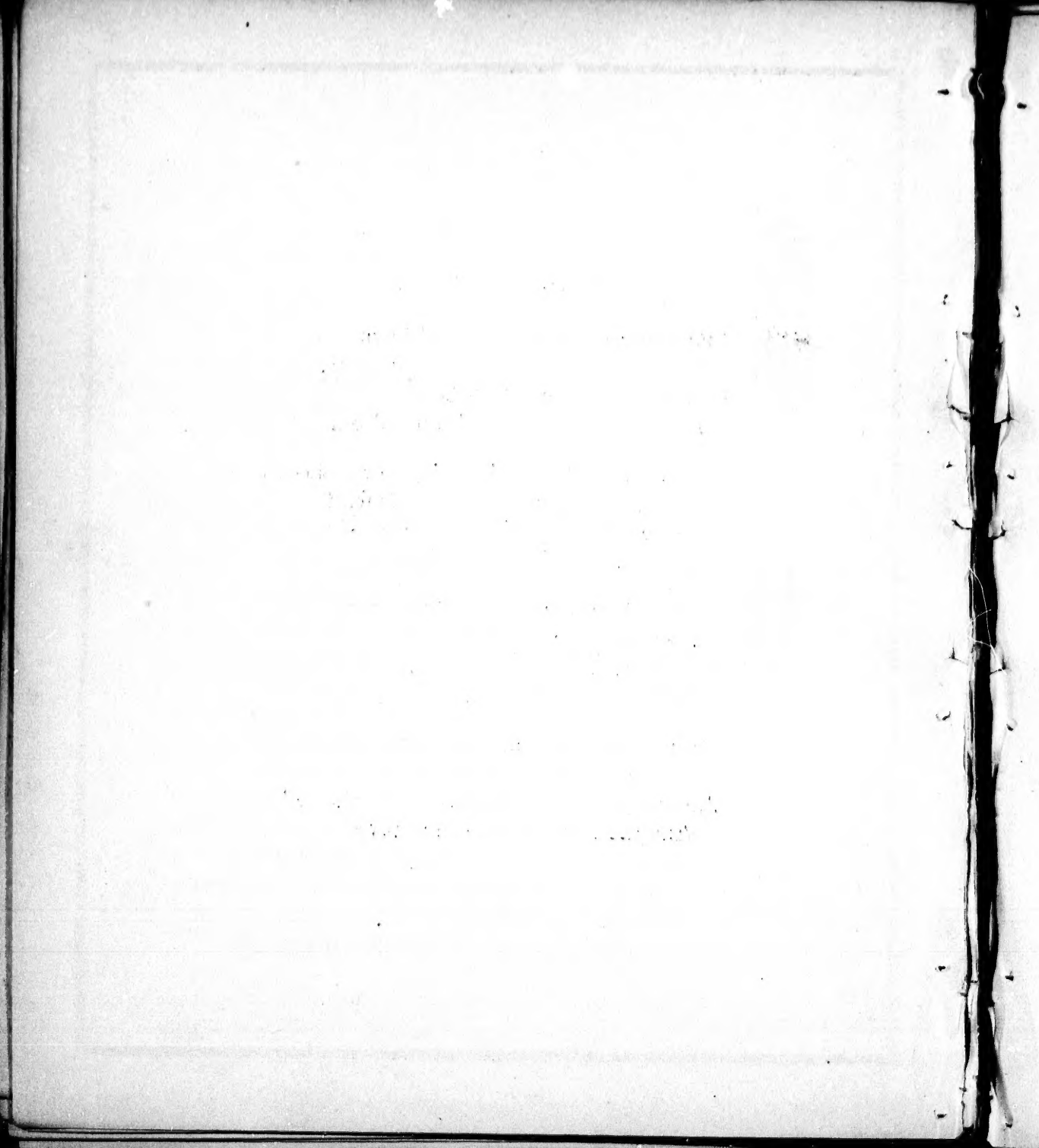


FELL from heaven at golden dawn
Like a tear from the sky's blue deep ;
I fell in the cell of a lily's bell,
And woke all the world from sleep.

The cock called out from his drowsy shed,
The humming-bee woke to his feast,
And sleep blew off from the eyes of men,
As the mists blew out of the east.

Phœbus harnessed his snorting steeds,
And let down his golden bars,
And strewed the fields of heaven with red,
As the night blew out with the stars.

Then Helios rose from his streams in the east,
And smote on the doors of day,
And the worker arose from his rest to toil,
And the priest in his cell to pray.



RODODACTULOS.



HE night blows outward in a mist,
And all the world the sun has kissed.

Along the golden rim of sky,
A thousand snow-piled vapors lie.

And by the wood and mist clad stream,
The Maiden Morn stands still to dream.

THE MEADOW SPRING.



ERE, in a deep blue cavern of the sun,
Like some lost jewel, in the tangled grass
I lie, where cloudlets ever pass and pass,
And o'er my breast the unseen breezes run.
Deep in my crystal heart, fallen one by one
From out the burnished quiver of the sky,
The sunbeams' golden shafted arrows lie.
O, dreamer of the summer lands, but come,
And, bending down, gaze on my silent face,
When from the sky's high dome all clouds are furled,
And I will show you, by the season's grace,
What I by subtlest charm have conjured here—
A universe of beauty in a tear—
A mirrored glimpse of all the glowing world.



INDIAN SUMMER.



LONG the line of smoky hills
The crimson forest stands,
And all the day the blue-jay calls
Throughout the autumn lands.

Now by the brook the maple leans
With all his glory spread,
And all the sumachs on the hills
Have turned their green to red.

Now by great marshes wrapt in mist,
Or past some river's mouth,
Throughout the long, still autumn day
Wild birds are flying south.

TO A CLUMP OF MOSS.



NOW thou sleepest, where the wood is deepest,
Green and cool,
In the great shady gloom of the wood,
Beside some pool.

To thee is given the dew of heaven
Alone to drink,
Out of the crystal flagons the night
Lets down from the heaven's brink.